

*County of Moore*  
*Department of Health*  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Moore County Health Department Response to H1N1 (Swine) Flu**

Every flu season has the potential to cause a lot of illness, doctor's visits, hospitalizations and deaths. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is concerned that the novel H1N1 flu virus could result in a particularly severe flu season this year. As the lead agency charged with coordinating Moore County's response to the H1N1 flu outbreak, the Moore County Health Department has been working closely with Moore County government, FirstHealth of the Carolinas Moore Regional Hospital, local physicians' offices, Moore County Schools, private schools and Sandhills Community College to develop a comprehensive response plan. The plan is based on CDC recommendations, as well as directives from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

The first phase of the plan centers on educating the public about prevention and infection control. The best way for everyone to prevent the spread of this disease is good personal hygiene. Please remember to:

- wash hands often with soap and water, or use a 60% or more alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available
- cover your nose or mouth with a tissue when sneezing or coughing
- avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth
- stay home when sick.

The second phase of the plan focuses on treatment with antiviral medications. Antivirals such as Tamiflu should not be used for healthy people in an attempt to prevent becoming sick. Medical providers should be utilizing CDC recommendations for prescribing antivirals. These CDC recommendations are that priority use for antiviral drugs is to treat severe influenza and people with active flu who have a condition that places them at high-risk for serious flu-related complications, such as asthma.

The third phase of the plan involves a collaborative effort between the Moore County Health Department and its community partners to outline the projected distribution of the H1N1 vaccine, which is expected to be available in October. The vaccine, which may initially be in limited supply, will be administered based on CDC recommendations. The priority groups to receive the vaccine are expected to be:

- pregnant women,
- persons who live with or care for children under 6 months of age,
- health care workers and emergency responders,

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- persons between 6 months and 24 years of age, and
- persons between 25 and 64 years old at higher risk because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems.

Current studies indicate that the risk for infection among persons age 65 or older is less than the risk for younger age groups. However, once vaccine demand among the priority groups has been met, vaccine will become available for those not in the priority groups. When the H1N1 vaccine is made available, the Health Department will ensure that priority groups are instructed how to best obtain the vaccination.

Vaccines are the best tool we have to prevent influenza. The CDC has strongly recommended that people get vaccinated against seasonal influenza as soon as vaccines become available at their doctors' offices and in their communities. The seasonal flu vaccine is unlikely to provide protection against novel H1N1 influenza. The novel H1N1 vaccine is not intended to replace the seasonal flu vaccine – it is intended to be administered in addition to the seasonal flu vaccine.

For more information, visit the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu).

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